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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 15 January 2013 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

In follow-up to my previous letters, the most recent of which was conveyed on 10 January 2013, I write to draw your attention to the critical situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the territory that constitutes the State of Palestine and that has been under Israeli military occupation for more than 45 years. Israel's illegal policies and practices continue to inflict loss of life, loss of property and suffering on the Palestinian civilian population, a population whose human rights are undeniably being systematically and grossly violated by the occupying Power, with many of those violations amounting to war crimes.

In recent days, several young Palestinians have lost their lives to the brutality of the occupation as Israeli soldiers continue to use excessive force, including live ammunition against civilians, unarmed and defenceless, including those engaging in protest against the occupying Power. Today, 15 January, a Palestinian boy, Samir Ahmad Abdulrahim Awad, age 17, was killed by Israeli occupying forces in the village of Budrus. He died after sustaining four bullet wounds to the head, chest and leg when occupying forces shot at him and several other youths who were protesting an Israeli raid near the village high school in an area nearby the Wall, which has been built by the occupying Power on the village's land and against which the Palestinian residents of Budrus have been peacefully and non-violently demonstrating for years now, at great peril and cost to civilian lives, with several deaths and injuries endured owing to Israel's excessive use of force.

Two young Palestinian men were also recently killed by the Israeli occupying forces in the Gaza Strip, near the border area, where three Palestinians have been killed and at least 30 others wounded since the ceasefire that was concluded following the Israeli military aggression in November 2012. On Friday, 11 January, Israeli soldiers shot and killed Anwar Muhammad Al-Mamlouk, age 22, in an area east of the Jabaliya refugee camp. This was followed by the killing yesterday,

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14 January, of Mustafa Abu Jarad, age 21, in the town of Beit Lahiya. The killing of these civilians constitutes a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the human right to life, and underscores the need to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to respect international humanitarian and human rights law with a view to protecting and ensuring the safety and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation.

Today, I must also draw your attention to recent developments on the ground in connection with Israel's provocative declaration of the intention to proceed with illegal plans for the construction of more than 3,000 settlement units in the so-called "E1" area east of Occupied East Jerusalem, an area of confiscated Palestinian land covering 4.6 square miles in the centre of the West Bank. We have repeatedly drawn the international community's attention to this critical matter and continue to urge serious action, including by the Security Council, to pressure the occupying Power to rescind this decision and to cease all settlement activities throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

On Friday, 11 January, more than 200 Palestinian activists from across Palestine gathered at the "E1" area in a non-violent demonstration against the occupation and specifically against Israel's destructive, illegal settlement colonization of Palestinian land. There, the activists erected tents and established the "Bab Al-Shams" (Gate of the Sun) village. The statement released by the activists in conjunction with this popular act of resistance underscores the peaceful and non-violent nature of their actions, based on international legal rules and principles affirming, inter alia, the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and freedom and the right to defend their land against the usurpation by the occupying Power. In this regard, the activists declared, inter alia, "For decades, Israel has established facts on the ground as the international community remained silent in response to these violations. The time has come now to change the rules of the game, for us to establish facts on the ground — our own land."

Regrettably, Israel responded to this legitimate act of non-violent, political protest with typical heavy-handed force and arrogance, deploying occupying forces to evict the activists from the area. The Israeli soldiers used force to remove the demonstrators, with some sustaining injuries as a result. This was followed by provocative announcements by Israeli officials, including the Prime Minister, who declared, "We will not let anyone block the continuum between Jerusalem and 'Maale Adumim'". It is imperative to note here that "Maale Adumim" is an Israeli settlement that has been established in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by Israel in wilful and grave breach of international law, i.e., constituting a war crime. Similarly, today, 15 January, when dozens of other Palestinian demonstrators tried to return to "Bab Al-Shams", the occupying forces forcibly obstructed them from accessing the area and arrested several civilians. Here, we echo the calls, including those made by Your Excellency, for respect for the right of the Palestinian people to peaceful protest.

We caution the international community once again about the dangers of the prevailing situation, and we urge serious, collective action, foremost by the Security Council, to address these ongoing violations of the rights of the Palestinian people and the constant colonization of their land by Israel, the occupying Power. An unequivocal demand must be made to Israel to cease, fully and immediately, all of its settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The international community must find the political will to address this

critical situation to compel Israel to halt its settlement campaign and abide by international law. The viability of the State of Palestine and the political and physical prospects for achieving the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders are dependent on this.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 449 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 10 January 2013 (A/ES-10/576-S/2013/14) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations